**Section 672.205 Application Procedures**

The Department will provide an application for applying to become an authorized WIC Retail Vendor. Submission of a completed application shall not constitute authorization for an applicant to accept or receive payment for Food Benefits. Any application submitted improperly or incompletely will be rejected and applicants will need to request a new application if they wish to re-apply. Applicants must complete each step in the authorization process as described in subsections (a) through (f) within 60 calendar days after the Department's notification of the requirement. If a vendor does not complete the steps successfully within this timeframe, the application will be rejected, and the vendor will be required to request a new application. An applicant can apply for authorization to become a WIC Retail Vendor by completing, at minimum, the following steps:

a) Submitting a complete application and all required documents that demonstrate that the applicant meets the federally mandated selection criteria specified in 7 CFR 246.12(g)(3) and (g)(4). The application and all supporting documents shall be properly completed and verified by the Department. No application will be deemed complete unless it includes all necessary supporting documents required by this Section.

1) Each owner, partner, limited partner, or shareholder of 5% or more of any stock shall provide a statement concerning any conviction for a misdemeanor involving fraud, theft, or misuse of state or federal funds or for any felony.

2) Each applicant or authorized representative shall attest to the accuracy of information provided in the application.

3) Proof of FEIN shall include a copy of a notice of new employer identification number assigned or a copy of the Federal Tax Deposit Coupon.

4) Proof of identity for each owner, partner, limited partner or shareholder of 5% or more of any stock shall include a copy of their driver's license or a government-issued identification card.

5) If applicable, proof of USDA SNAP authorization shall include a copy of the federal SNAP authorization /Retailer Card.

6) The applicant shall provide documents that verify the date of purchase or acquisition of the business entity for which the applicant is seeking WIC Vendor authorization.

7) Any vendor application with a vendor type of Pharmacy or Grocery with Pharmacy shall provide proof of active licensure in good standing with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR).

8) Each applicant shall attest to compliance with necessary local, municipal, or village licensing requirements at the proposed Vendor Site and may be required to provide proof of licensing by the Department.

b) A price survey of the applicant's WIC Foods specified in the minimum stock requirement shall be completed as part of the application process. The cost of the WIC Foods will be compared to the Department's estimated cost. If three or more WIC Foods prices exceed the Department's estimated cost or the Vendor peer group's assigned price, the application will be denied.

c) Successful completion of the initial training seminar (see Section 672.305).

d) Successful completion of an initial site visit.

1) The Department shall conduct an education visit of the proposed Vendor Site after receipt of a completed application. The visit will determine whether the applicant has the minimum quantities, sizes, and types of WIC Foods and will verify any business or financial information submitted by the applicant. The Department will also review and document whether the infant formula maintained as inventory was purchased from an approved source. Food products originating from WIC Food Centers or CSFP or "expired" infant formula will not count towards the minimum quantities, sizes, and types of WIC Foods.

2) If the education visit by the Department discloses that the applicant's proposed Vendor Site does not have the minimum quantities, sizes, and types of WIC Foods necessary or that business or financial information supplied by the applicant is erroneous, inaccurate, or insufficient, a second visit shall be scheduled within 30 calendar days after the initial visit. If the second visit does not meet the requirements as stated in this subsection (d), then the application shall be denied.

e) Full certification and demonstration of readiness to process WIC EBT transactions with a WIC-enabled integrated cash register system, except where participant access criteria are met in Section 672.200(d).

1) If the Illinois eWIC certification visit by the Department discloses that the applicant's Point of Sale System does not meet the minimum requirements to complete Illinois eWIC transactions, a second certification visit shall be scheduled within 30 calendar days after the initial visit.

2) If the second visit does not meet the requirements as stated in this subsection (e), the application shall be denied.

f) Fully executed and signed contract.

g) The applicant shall have an obligation to notify the Department in writing of material changes in information contained on the application after authorization and during the term of the WIC Vendor authorization.

h) The applicant shall be notified by the Department, within 30 calendar days, after each step in the application process has been successfully completed and upon eligibility for the next step in the application procedures.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 2491, effective January 30, 2024)